

February 12, 1999
Abraham Lincoln's birthday

Judgment, Though Not Conviction

Bipartisan Judgment Against the President

Today, the President of the United States escaped conviction on impeachment. He has not, however, escaped judgment. During the past two months, the 535 elected members of the Congress of the United States have solemnly judged President Clinton guilty (whether legally or morally or both) of infamous conduct:

Fifty Senators Voted to Remove President Clinton from Office. Today, February 12, 1999, **one-half of the United States Senate voted to remove President Clinton from his high office.** Fifty United States Senators voted to convict President Clinton of obstruction of justice (Article II), and 45 Senators voted to convict President Clinton of perjury (Article I).

A Large, Bipartisan Group of Senators Were Willing to Censure Clinton. Senator Feinstein attempted to bring a censure resolution to the Senate floor, but the Senate Rules stood in her way: Nevertheless, **56 Senators from both parties voted to consider the Feinstein resolution today.** The censure resolution said —

- President Clinton “engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate employee in the White House” and that relationship was “shameful, reckless and indefensible.”
- President Clinton “deliberately misled and deceived the American people, and people in all branches of the United States government.”
- President Clinton “gave false or misleading testimony, and his actions have had the effect of impeding discovery of evidence in judicial proceedings.”
- President Clinton’s “conduct in this matter is unacceptable for a president of the United States, [and it] does demean the office of the president as well as the president himself, and creates disrespect for the laws of the land.”
- President Clinton’s “conduct in this matter has brought shame and dishonor to himself and to the office of the president,” and his conduct “has violated the trust of the American people.”

The Feinstein resolution went on to resolve that the United States Senate “does hereby censure William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, and does condemn his

wrongful conduct in the strongest terms.” The resolution also calls on future Congresses to allow the resolution “of censure and condemnation to remain intact for all time.”

The resolution was sponsored by Senators Feinstein (D), Bennett (R), Moynihan (D), Chafee (R), Kohl (D), Jeffords (R), Lieberman (D), Gordon Smith (R), Daschle (D - Democratic Leader), Snowe (R), Reid (D - Assistant Democratic Leader), Gorton (R), Bryan (D), McConnell (R), Cleland (D), Domenici (R), Torricelli (D), Campbell (R), Wyden (D), Lincoln (D), Kerry (D), Kerrey (D), Schumer (D), Durbin (D), Murray (D), Wellstone (D), Breaux (D), Mikulski (D), Dorgan (D), Baucus (D), Reed (D), Landrieu (D), Kennedy (D), Levin (D), Rockefeller (D), and Robb (D).

The House of Representatives Impeached Clinton for Perjury and Obstruction of Justice. Of course, the United States House of Representatives also has condemned the President. On December 19, 1998, 228 Representatives (223 Republicans and five Democrats) adopted an article of impeachment that said that President Clinton had, contrary to his constitutional obligations, willfully corrupted and manipulated the judicial process for his personal gain by providing perjurious, false, and misleading testimony to a Federal grand jury, and that such conduct warranted conviction and removal from office.

That same day, 221 Representatives (216 Republicans and five Democrats) adopted an article of impeachment that said that President Clinton had, contrary to his constitutional obligations, prevented, obstructed, and impeded the administration of justice in a Federal civil rights action, and that such conduct warranted conviction and removal from office.

House Democrats Wished to Censure Clinton for Dishonoring the Presidency. That same day, December 19, 202 Democratic Representatives (and two Republicans) voted to allow the House of Representatives to vote on a “Sense of the House” resolution that said that President Clinton had “violated the trust of the American people” and “dishonored the office” of the presidency; that he “made false statements concerning his reprehensible conduct with a subordinate;” and that he “wrongly took steps to delay discovery of the truth.” In consequence, President Clinton “deserved the censure and condemnation of the American people” and the House of Representatives.

Congress has held a candle to the President’s shame, and that flickering light has revealed such dishonorable conduct that one-half of the Congress believes that President Clinton is no longer fit to hold his high office. The other half of Congress believes that the President’s actions have been so shameful and dishonorable that he deserves censure and condemnation but does not deserve to lose his office.

The President has escaped conviction on impeachment, but he has not, and will not, escape judgment.